United Nations S/PV.7116

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7116th meeting
Saturday, 22 February 2014, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-24253 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/115, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Australia, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2139 (2014).

I wish to welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon. I now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I very much welcome the adoption of resolution 2139 (2014). We are all keenly aware of the profound and prolonged desperation of the Syrian people. If this resolution is implemented quickly and in good faith, at least some of the suffering can be eased.

The resolution builds on presidential statement S/PRST/2013/15, adopted last year, and strengthens the Council's engagement in protecting civilians and ensuring the delivery of relief. The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate. Half of the country's people need urgent assistance. Host countries need support in caring for more than 2.5 million refugees.

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. They are the daily victims of brutal violence and indiscriminate attacks, including the use of heavy weapons, aerial bombings, mortars and car bombs in populated areas. There are continued reports of massacres and atrocities throughout the country. Women and girls have been subjected to sexual and gender-based violence.

The Syrian Government and allied militias have been responsible for countless killings, disappearances, the horrendous use of barrel bombs and torture on a massive scale. Opposition groups have carried out summary executions, the recruitment of children for combat and the use of terror tactics in civilian areas. Attacks against civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, continue unabated. These heinous acts are unacceptable and must stop immediately. All combatting parties in Syria must abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law.

I commend United Nations humanitarian personnel, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and our other partners for their bravery and commitment. Despite the dangerous circumstances, United Nations humanitarian agencies and our partners are reaching millions of people. But too many millions are beyond our reach, and funding continues to fall short. I urge the international community to step up its contributions.

This resolution should not have been necessary. Humanitarian assistance is not something to be negotiated; it is something to be allowed by virtue of international law.

It is profoundly shocking to me that both sides are besieging civilians as a tactic of war. Some 200,000 people are under siege in Government-controlled areas, and 45,000 in opposition-controlled areas.

More broadly, this resolution highlights again the urgent need to end the conflict.

While the political process continues, we will continue to do all we can to provide relief and protection to people in need on the ground.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014) on the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

The aim of the resolution is simple: it seeks to protect civilians affected by the conflict in Syria. It demands that rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access be authorized across conflict lines and across borders, so that humanitarian assistance can be conveyed along the most direct routes to the people who need it. It recalls that starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited under international humanitarian law. It reaffirms that those who have committed violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in Syria must be brought to justice. Finally, it underscores the importance of finding a political solution to the Syrian conflict.

In recent weeks, along with our colleagues from Australia and Jordan, we worked to build a consensus around a strong resolution that would enable us to change the situation on the ground.

By adopting resolution 2139 (2014), the Security Council is sending a clear and unified message to all parties to the conflict in Syria with a view to ensuring that humanitarian access to all Syrians in need is guaranteed, that the siege of cities where civilians are trapped is lifted, and that an end be put to the senseless atrocities and indiscriminate bombings and to the use of barrels bombs, whose only goal is to the civilian population.

The requests that the Security Council made in the presidential statement adopted on 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15) unfortunately were not followed up on. The humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate at an unacceptable pace. Today approximately 10 million Syrians, half of whom are children, are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. More than 3 million of them are living in areas that are difficult to access. More than 2.4 million Syrians, more than half of whom are children, have had to take refuge in neighbouring countries, primarily Lebanon and Jordan. Given that tragic deterioration of the situation, the Security Council had to act.

With today's unanimous vote, the Security Council is shouldering its responsibilities. Henceforth it is up to the parties to the conflict in Syria, primarily the Syrian authorities, to fully and swiftly implement the provisions of the resolution that we have just adopted and the provisions of the presidential statement of 2 October 2013.

The Syrian authorities must endorse without further delay the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/522, annex). The parties must work towards a genuine political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

The resolution includes provisions that will enable the Security Council to verify in a precise manner whether its demands have been implemented on the ground. The Council expresses its intent, in the case of non-compliance with the resolution, to take further steps to support the vital humanitarian efforts in Syria.

Today, to the Council's credit, international humanitarian law and the needs of the Syrian people have prevailed over the interests of those who cling to power in Syria. Luxembourg is proud to have contributed actively to this result. We sincerely hope that this will mark a turning point for the Syrian people.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): In adopting resolution 2139 (2014) this morning unanimously, all members of the Security Council have recognized that the humanitarian situation in Syria is desperate.

The country has disintegrated, and neighbouring countries are threatened by the effects. Almost half of Syria's population needs urgent assistance. A third of the housing has been destroyed and over 60 per cent of the hospitals destroyed or damaged. Almost a third of the people are internally displaced. Three million have fled; two and a half million are refugees; 2.3 million are now out of school; and one in five schools are either occupied or destroyed. Medical workers and hospitals have been directly targeted, and a majority of Syria's health workers have fled. At least a quarter of a million people scratch to survive in besieged cities and towns with no food or medical relief for over a year.

Dag Hammarskjöld famously said that the United Nations was not created to take humanity to heaven but to save it from hell. But by any measure, the Syrian people long ago descended into hell. It should not have taken the Council so long to take today's action, indeed, as the Secretary-General has just said, it should not have been necessary.

The Council has demanded that this resolution be implemented in full. If it is, it will make a difference to the lives of millions of Syrians.

The Council's core demand is that the Syrian parties to the conflict, and, above all, the Syrian authorities, reverse course now and start to put the interests of their own citizens first. The Syrian military must cease its systematic and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. The devastating aerial bombing campaign in Aleppo, which has seen a further 500,000 people displaced, must end. The use of barrel bombs — a weapon designed to create civilian terror and cause maximum injury to civilians — must cease immediately. Aid must be allowed to reach all those who need it by the most direct means possible, including across battle lines and across borders. It must be allowed to those people living under siege, and people in such areas who want to leave must be allowed to do so.

Armed opposition groups must also comply with the calls made in the resolution to end abuses of human rights, abide by international humanitarian law and facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance in the areas they control. The Council has said plainly that Al-Qaida and associated groups have no place in Syria and that all foreign fighters should leave the country.

We have acknowledged again that the only sustainable solution to the Syrian conflict is a political transition. The challenges are self-evident, but we must continue efforts to achieve this. And, as the Council has recognized in this resolution, there must be no impunity for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights. Australia also reiterates its call for the Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

The Council's unanimity today has been necessary, but it is not enough. The resolution can benefit the Syrian people only if it is implemented in full. The primary responsibility, as I have said, lies with the Syrian authorities. Others on the ground, including opposition groups, must also comply. The resolution is also binding on all of us. Council members and the wider United Nations membership must themselves do what they can to pressure the Syrian authorities and the opposition groups to implement it.

The resolution has made very clear the Council's expectations that its demands will be met and that there will be consequences for non-compliance. We will remain determined in this.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Jordan welcomes the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2139 (2014). Jordan is proud to have been one of its authors, along with Australia and Luxembourg, in implementation of an Arab Ministerial mandate. We negotiated the text of the resolution with the other members of the Security Council and made every effort to achieve the broadest possible consensus.

In that respect, we would like to thank all members of the Council, both permanent and non-permanent, for the good faith they showed during the consultations. We commend the Council's unified position.

The resolution just adopted deals with the various dimensions of the humanitarian tragedy in Syria, which is now untenable at the internal level. It does not only entail attacks against civilians by all kinds of prohibited and non-prohibited weapons, but it went even further by imposing a suffocating blockade on many regions of the country, which has led to starvation and widespread violations of international humanitarian law throughout Syria, some of which amounted to crimes against humanity.

According to the statistics, nearly 9.3 million Syrians need humanitarian assistance, of whom 6.5 million are internally displaced persons. In additon, 250,000 Syrians are trapped in besieged areas and almost 2 million Syrians require humanitarian aid in regions that are difficult to reach. The negative consequences of this internal humanitarian tragedy has gone beyond Syria's borders into neighbouring countries, thereby creating an international problem of humanitarian refugees. That has affected all aspects of economic and social life in, and the security of, those neighbouring countries. The number of refugees who have been forced to leave Syria has reached 2.9 million people, with 2.4 million having found refuge in neighbouring countries. In Jordan, we have welcomed 1,300,000 refugees from Syria — 600,000 since the beginning of the crisis, almost three years ago. The cost of hosting those refugees amounted to $1.7 billion in 2013. That is expected to rise to $2.8 billion in 2014.

Such negative consequences for the neighbouring countries will have a long-term impact, which will require an effective approach by the Council and the international community towards the Syrian refugee crisis. The continuing humanitarian situation of such a dimension threatens the security and stability of the Middle East. How the Council approaches the humanitarian situation should therefore not depend upon politics. We reaffirm that this resolution should

not negatively affect the political aspect but should strengthen and reaffirm that element, as reaffirmed in paragraph 15 and the eleventh preambular paragraph of the resolution.

We underscore the importance of the parties to the conflict in Syria now immediately and fully implementing all the provisions of the resolution. All parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, must allow humanitarian relief operations through borders and through lines of fire. The parties must immediately begin to dismantle the blockades imposed on certain towns and regions and must put an end to all attacks against civilians, in particular in residential areas, including aerial bombardments and the use of barrel bombs.

The Council will closely monitor the commitment of the parties to the conflict in fully implementing this resolution.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the unanimous adoption of this resolution on humanitarian acccess in Syria resolution 2139 (2014). Given the tragedy taking place, which has been escalating daily for three years, the contrary would have been incomprehensible. How could the Council have remained silent in the face of 140,000 people losing their lives or 3 million Syrians without humanitarian assistance and the desperate flight of nearly half the population, who are now refugees or displaced?

The resolution was urgent and necessary. That is why from the beginning France supported the draft text initiated by Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg, to whom we express our gratitude. This urgent resolution demands that the Government of Syria, carried away by its own violence, respect international humanitarian law and stop bombing civilians, starving its people and torturing prisoners. It demands the immediate lifting of sieges. It demands that the Government authorize humanitarian organizations to help all those in need across the front lines and borders. It demands an end to attacks on United Nations personnel, humanitarian actors and journalists.

This crucial resolution must put an end to the deafness of the Syrian Government to the appeal by humanitarian actors and the Council, which on 2 October made specific demands for the provision of humanitarian access. We must all admit — and that is the reason for the resolution — that the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/15) did not produce tangible results. Far from reaching all those in need throughout Syria, humanitarian assistance remains inaccessible in besieged areas and sporadic in areas that are difficult to reach.

The Syrian regime is trying to make us believe that it is a reliable and responsible partner in the humanitarian sphere. The examples of evacuations from Moadamiya and Homs a few weeks ago show us the opposite. Far from being ideal, they were slow in implementation, limited in effect and tragic in their follow-up. Many of those evacuated were arrested and are still missing. For some days, the Government has stepped up media reports of local ceasefires. Let us not be deceived: such ceasefires are imposed on scared, exhausted and starving people as part of a deliberate policy pursued by the Government for people to starve to death or surrender.

At the same time, the Syrian Government is using increasingly barbarian and deadly bombs against the civilian population. After the cluster bombs, ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, the authorities are now launching barrel bombs against civilians — the ultimate weapon of terror. The use of such weapons is not a detail, as some people have said. They have no military justification. They seek only to kill civilians and combatants indiscriminately. For the thousands of civilians who die as a result of those bombs and for the hundreds of thousands of civilians who flee terrorized, it is not a detail. France welcomes the courage and determination of the Syrian people. We cannot abandon them in the hands of those torturers.

With the adoption of this resolution, the Security Council avoids the dishonour of silence. It is now up to us collectively to ensure that the parties to the conflict, in particular the regime, heed the strong and urgent message conveyed to it and translate the Council's requests into specific actions.

I wish to underscore the intention expressed by the Council to adopt additional measures if the resolution is not implemented. We will therefore return to the Chamber in 30 days to hear the report of the Secretary-General and, if the Syrian Government remains deaf to our demands, we should take the necessary measures. France will not forget about the meeting.

The humanitarian suffering can be resolved only by means of a political transition. We cannot accept an end without follow-up to the discussions in Geneva. There again, it is the Syrian regime that bears the

responsibility for the failure by refusing the agenda for the talks proposed by Mr. Brahimi and accepted by the opposition. It is up to us to show collectively the same urgency and resolve. France will continue to stand beside the Syrian people. Criminals should pay for their crimes.

Ms. Power (United States of America): At long last, the Security Council has spoken clearly and unanimously about the devastating humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Syria. For a body that has long been too divided to acknowledge even the basic facts of the horror in Syria, today's resolution (resolution 2139 (2014)) is a long overdue and altogether necessary step towards reality.

Whatever has or has not transpired in the Security Council for the past three years, the Syrian people have had the grave misfortune of living in the real world. That real world is what was captured in this week's report from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — that more than 173,000 people are believed to be trapped in Ghouta, including several thousands who have hardly any food and have been given permission by the religious authorities to eat cats and dogs. That real world is what was recounted recently by the Secretary-General, when he informed the Council of the unspeakable abuses being committed against children, including kidnapping, sexual violence, beatings with whips, electric shocks and imprisonment without cause.

The real world in Syria today is a medical system that has collapsed; a school system that barely functions; a city of Aleppo that once had 5,000 doctors and now has some 36; a country where a quarter of a million people are trying to survive in neighbourhoods under siege, 2.5 million are refugees and 6.5 million are displaced; a country with countless hungry children, untreated infections, shrapnel wounds and lost limbs; a country where some mothers are denied the nourishment they require to sustain the infants that they hold in their arms; and a country where the bombs continue to fall, the shelling goes on and the agony deepens.

Some say that all of that is the inevitable consequence of war. I say it is the result of actions intentionally and wilfully taken by specific individuals, and what those individuals have the power to do, they have the power and responsibility to stop. I refer to the Syrian regime, led by Bashar Al-Assad, who has put his devotion to preserving power above the welfare of tens of millions of people. I refer to him and his security forces, who pummel civilian neighbourhoods with barrel bombs, his snipers who delight in picking off children who are walking with their parents so as to watch both suffer unbearably, and I refer to terrorist groups like Al-Nusra and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, who in the name of revolution have, in parts of Syria, imposed a new terror on Syrians, supplementing Al-Assad's dictatorial fanaticism with religious fanaticism.

The resolution adopted today and the day-to-day reality in Syria are not about politics or ideology. We came here as representatives from around the world to do what we could to try to help people who are in desperate need of help to live and breathe as we do. That is all.

It is remarkable to the world that it has taken three years for the Security Council to recognize basic facts and to call for such basic principles of humanity — simply that Syrians in need should not be held under siege, that they should not be bombed by barrel bombs and that they should not be starved. It is a gross understatement to say it should not have taken this long.

The resolution is important for two reasons. It has a clear demand for specific and concrete actions, and it is a commitment to act in the event of non-compliance. It was a difficult resolution to agree on, but it should not have been. Many of the issues that come before this body are complicated. This is not.

It is because the United States believes that civilians should not be starved, should not be bombed and should not be denied access to the most basic things required to sustain life that we welcome today's action by the Security Council. It is now our fervent hope that the Council will show similar courage to ensure that our unanimous demands result in changes to ease suffering, especially for the hundreds of thousands of civilians who have been encircled by snipers and trapped in besieged communities. Our goal here today is to ensure that help is received by people who will die without it and that innocent civilians are not killed while waiting for that assistance to arrive.

It remains to be seen whether our action today will have the beneficial results we intend. Given its track record to date, the Syrian regime can be trusted only to deny what it has done and lie about what it will do. Accordingly, I call upon all Council members and all members of the international community to join

in pressing Damascus — and any actor who fails to comply — to fulfil the terms of the resolution on a comprehensive and urgent basis. There should be no more broken promises, no more delays and no more coupling minor concessions with crimes that are so horrific, so systematic and so recurrent that they have lost some of their power to shock the conscience.

Today, the Council has achieved consensus. Now we must insist upon action. Our common security, our common humanity and our collective conscience demand nothing less.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council decided relatively recently to consider the humanitarian situation in Syria, and only after it became clear that attempts to use the deterioration of the humanitarian situation to effect regime change were unsuccessful.

The Russian Federation supported the resolution just adopted (resolution 2139 (2014)) because, in the process of negotiating its text, many Russian considerations were taken into account, and the resulting document was thus of a balanced nature.

The main aim of international efforts concerning the humanitarian crisis in Syria, including today's resolution, is to improve the situation in Syria and facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the population in need. In order to achieve that, all parties must cooperate with international humanitarian agencies. Those agencies, in coordination with the Syrian authorities and with the active assistance of the Russian Federation, are carrying out difficult, painstaking work in very difficult conflict conditions.

That work has seen positive and concrete results, although not as quickly as we would have liked. There has been a gradual opening up of the population centres. Recent examples include the southern suburbs of Damascus — Yalda, Babila, Bayt Sahm and Aqraba — where until very recently, residents were firing weapons against soldiers. They are now patrolling with them and pooling their efforts to combat banditry and terrorism. The established ceasefire in Barzeh and Moadamiya is important. Thousands of civilians have returned home. Progress is being made on the reconstruction of the infrastructure in all the population centres mentioned, and soon there are going to be functioning medical centres and schools.

Progress in improving the difficult situation for civilians has shown the value of effective humanitarian operations and of providing support with the coordinated action of all participating parties. That experience needs to be expanded to other areas of Syria as well. There need to be agreements on localized ceasefires, access for humanitarian supplies and the exchange of prisoners.

There have also been other advances. An air bridge to provide humanitarian access to Qamishli has been organized. Humanitarian terminals have been opened. Vaccination campaigns against polio have been successfully carried out throughout the country, reaching over 3.4 million children.

Despite the difficult conditions on the ground, areas that are difficult to access in Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Hama and Dayr Al-Zour and Raqqa have received more than 51 convoys. Work is under way to normalize the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian Al-Yarmouk camp. However, the armed rebels in Syria are continuing to plunder convoys, kill humanitarian workers and attack civilian facilities, using civilians as human shields and carrying out terrorist attacks. There is still no way to provide assistance to the besieged areas of Nubul and Zahra, besieged by the rebels, in Aleppo, Fuah and Kifarya in the Idlib governorate, Adra in the suburbs of Damascus, and the northeast province of Hasakah.

Similar activities by the opposition to undermine humanitarian operations must be swiftly and firmly condemned by all members of the international community. We believe that the resolution appropriately assesses such actions, and the appropriate signals will reach those who are sabotaging humanitarian efforts in Syria.

The resolution adopted today focuses on the need to provide humanitarian access based on a mutual, unpoliticized and impartial approach and in line with the guiding principles of the United Nations in the area of providing humanitarian assistance. That fully applies to the provisions of the resolution regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance across front lines and the borders of neighbouring countries. We believe that humanitarian workers will adhere to those rules and the Secretary-General will bear this in mind in his reports to the Security Council. We trust that Syrian authorities and the opposition will implement the

resolution appropriately by freeing besieged areas and so-called remote regions.

The Security Council, irrespective of the progress achieved by this resolution and its implementation by all sides, can consider further steps. However, we would like to underscore that the resolution does not provide for an automatic imposition of sanctions — the Security Council would not have allowed that.

The resolution once again draws attention to the fact that, given the lack of a political settlement, the humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate. We believe that an improvement in the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, just as a solution to the problems that are causing the ongoing and bloody conflict in the country, will be possible only through a comprehensive political settlement. That is possible by ensuring sustainable progress in negotiations among the Syrian parties based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/522, annex). That document is based on the understanding that decisions on fundamental matters of developing the Syrian State will be taken by the Syrian people themselves, based on mutual consent. Only decisions taken in such a way can be viable and lead to the settlement of the conflict in the country, which has already suffered so much.

A central element of the resolution is its strong anti-terrorism component, which is in line with the June 2013 declaration adopted by the Group of Eight Heads of State and Government meeting at Lough Erne. It calls on all Syrian sides to break with terrorists. In that regard, we underscore the need for the opposition groups not only to assume their responsibilities but to support the fight against terrorism in Syria in order to eradicate the problem and to work together with the Government to overcome that challenge.

We believe that the Security Council should swiftly proceed to discuss a further draft document on countering terrorist activities in Syria.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014), on Syria. Today, the Council has finally shown that, whatever its political differences over Syria, it was not entirely indifferent to the devastating humanitarian crisis. We applaud the efforts of Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg in leading the negotiating process.

It has been nearly three years now since the Syrian people bravely stood up to demand their legitimate and universal rights. Since then, Al-Assad has waged a brutal war against his own people. He is responsible for the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world and some of the worst human rights abuses in the world.

Four-and-a-half months ago, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/15) that was designed to alleviate the humanitarian impact of this conflict. The Council urged all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, to take a number of specific steps to improve access and to protect civilians. But not only has that statement been roundly ignored by the Syrian regime; the situation has got drastically worse.

My Russian colleague suggests that there has been humanitarian progress, but the reality on the ground tells a very different story. There are now 9.3 million people in need — an increase of more than one third since 2 October. Over the same period, the number of internally displaced persons has risen by 50 per cent, to 6.5 million people. And an estimated 140,000 people have been killed since the crisis began — an increase of 40 per cent since six months ago.

Last week, Valerie Amos came to the Council and laid bare the scale of this humanitarian crisis (see S/PV.7109). She called on the Council to take urgent action to improve the reach of humanitarian organizations. Today, the Council has answered that call. We hope that the adoption of resolution 2139 (2014) will lead to action on the ground, bringing some relief to the millions of Syrians in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

The resolution demands that the Syrian regime lift the siege of besieged areas, end the abhorrent and indiscriminate use of barrel bombs in populated areas and allow the United Nations and its partners to deliver aid across borders. The Syrian regime must immediately comply with those demands. To cite just one example, more than 1 million people in the most extreme need would immediately benefit from United Nations aid delivered across borders. The Security Council will review the humanitarian situation every 30 days and, as the resolution makes clear, we fully intend to take further steps if the demands set out in the resolution are ignored.

Although this resolution is an important step forward, we know that only an outcome on the political track will provide a lasting solution to the humanitarian

crisis in Syria. The United Kingdom will intensify its support with our allies for the "Geneva II" process to bring about a political settlement of the conflict in Syria. The international community must apply the same sense of unity in support of the Geneva II negotiations as it has shown today.

The message from the Council to the Syrian regime is clear: end the killing of your own people; stop the aerial bombardment, in particular barrel bombs; lift the sieges; and allow humanitarian aid to reach those in desperate need.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina would like to express its gratitude to the delegations of Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg for driving this initiative forward and for their efforts to achieve a consensus text, in which they conducted themselves with openness and transparency. We also wish to highlight the constructive attitude taken by all members of the Council, who, despite their different positions on the situation in Syria, managed to put unity first and agreed to speak with a single voice to help alleviate the grave humanitarian crisis afflicting the Syrian people.

It is clear that neither the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), despite its binding character, nor the various initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and the international community to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria have been able to attain the results we sought — insofar as the violence and killing have not stopped, and almost half of the population of the country is now in need of assistance.

The number of victims, while hard to pinpoint, is nonetheless compelling, demanding that the Security Council fulfil its institutional mandate, historic responsibility and moral conscience by ensuring it is not an obstacle but an instrument up to the task of helping reverse this tragic situation by taking new and more effective decisions.

The reports we receive week after week bring us to the realization that Syria and all of its people — especially the weakest and most vulnerable: women , young people and children — cannot and do not deserve to continue to be torn apart in the spiral of violence, cruelty, suffering, death, fear, despair, pain, slaughter, desolation and hunger. Nor do they deserve to be plunged into the even more chilling darkness of feeling that their suffering will never end.

While it is true that there have been some recent positive developments — such as the Homs ceasefire agreement, access to the Yarmouk camp, the positive results of the polio-vaccination campaign, the greater flexibility from the Government in issuing visas for humanitarian workers or the progress in establishing humanitarian aid distribution centres for in Aleppo and Qamishli — all of those things, even though they can be taken as encouraging signs, are clearly insufficient. We say this because, at the same time, flagrant violations of international humanitarian law continue unabated, as do deliberate attacks against people and property that are under specific protections — aid workers, medical personnel, patients, hospitals and schools. Indiscriminate attacks continue, with no distinction being made between civilians and combatants, as do horrendous sectarian massacres, such as that which occurred in Ma'an on 9 February. Without a doubt, these bleak events do nothing to slow the shocking deterioration of the humanitarian situation; on the contrary, their effect is to exacerbate the downward spiral.

Argentina voted in favour of resolution 2139 (2014) based on the conviction that the Security Council must assume its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations and explore all means and actions that may have a positive impact on the ground in order to alleviate the suffering the Syrian people and help the countries of the region affected directly by the consequences of this crisis, who have not shied away from accepting thousands of people on a daily basis, the vast majority of whom are fragile, frightened victims.

The resolution adopted today contains elements of great significance for Argentina, of which I will mention only a few. I underscore the fundamental importance of ensuring unrestricted access for humanitarian assistance. We must emphasize the responsibility to protect civilians, combat terrorism in all of its forms, call upon all of the parties to put an end to violence, ensure respect for human rights and for the norms of international humanitarian law, and urge the Syrian people to demonstrate, through pacific means and dialogue, their will to live in a society that respect life, preserves diversity and safeguards its cultural heritage.

As we reaffirm Argentina's commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, we reiterate that the fight against impunity and the full applicability of international humanitarian law and international human rights law

are not an obstacle to peace but, rather, an indispensable prerequisite for achieving it.

Along the same lines, we reiterate that those responsible for serious crimes and crimes against humanity must be held accountable for their actions and brought to justice. We also believe that humanitarian assistance is urgent and crucial and that the suffering and deprivation experienced by the Syrian people are a consequence and not the cause of the conflict. We fully agree with those who believe that there can be no military solution to the conflict, only a political one. Death cannot be resolved by causing more death, said our President in this very forum.

Only through an inclusive political dialogue without preconditions or extortion can the Syrian people move forward and find a path that will lead them to lasting peace and security. For that reason, we reiterate our call on all parties to make a decisive commitment to the negotiations begun in Geneva last month and the need for the principal regional and international players to help create the conditions necessary for all of the different actors in the Syrian conflict to overcome their differences through peaceful means, dialogue and substantive agreements.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina said at the Security Council meeting at which resolution 2118 (2013) was adopted:

> "With today's resolution, the Council is finally assuming its responsibility for stabilizing the situation in Syria and contributing to achieving a lasting peace, reaffirming the strength of multilateralism as a cornerstone of the collective security system established by the Charter of the United Nations as the world's only guarantee against the hegemony of might-is-right." (see S/PV.7038, p. 13).

Argentina believes that this resolution, which focuses on the humanitarian emergency affecting Syria, can in no way be used as an excuse for any unilateral use of force, nor can it give rise to militarization as a way of resolving the conflict.

Allow me to conclude by recalling what Pope Francis said on 7 September 2013, in a homily calling for dialogue and reconciliation in Syria. I am sure that the words of Pope Francis convey with deep simplicity the silent cry of the victims:

> "We have perfected our weapons, our conscience has fallen asleep, and we have sharpened our ideas to justify ourselves. As if it were normal, we continue to sow destruction, pain, death. Violence ... lead[s] only to death ... Peace expresses itself only in peace."

We hope that this resolution, the step we are taking today, will help to achieve this much-needed, long-sought-after objective.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Over the past three years, the Syrian conflict has continued to escalate, causing heavy casualties and serious loss of property, as well as the displacement of millions of civilians. China is seriously concerned at the ever-worsening humanitarian situation in Syria and sympathizes with the Syrian people who have sustained profound suffering. The current humanitarian situation in Syria must not continue.

China supports the efforts made by the international community, especially the United Nations, to ease the humanitarian situation in Syria and appreciates the contribution made by neighbouring countries in hosting a large number of Syrian refugees.

China has on many occasions provided humanitarian assistance to Syria and the neighbouring countries through multiple channels and will continue to provide help to the best of its ability to the Syrian people, including Syrian refugees outside Syria, so as to ease their suffering.

As the core of the collective security mechanism, the Security Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The adoption by the Council of resolution 2139 (2014) is yet another unanimous action taken by the Council on the question of Syria since the adoption of resolution 2118 (2013) last year. This is the result of the common efforts of the members of the Council.

In the current circumstances, the actions taken by the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria should be objective, balanced and conducive to the maintenance of international humanitarian norms and of the momentum for the political settlement of the Syrian crisis.

Resolution 2139 (2014) reiterates respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, states the responsibility of all parties concerned in Syria for the improvement of the

humanitarian situation, stresses the imperative for all parties to abide by the guiding principles of United Nations humanitarian relief work, expresses support for the political settlement of the Syrian question and sends a unanimous and powerful message for the early improvement of the humanitarian situation in Syria. As such, it is of great significance.

Going forward, the international community should ensure the implementation of resolution 2139 (2014). We urge all parties in Syria to set their sights on the interests of their nation and their people, comprehensively implement the resolution, fully cooperate with the United Nations and other organizations and make common efforts for the improvement of the humanitarian situation in their country. The international community should continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Syria and actively support the efforts made by neighbouring countries in hosting Syrian refugees.

Humanitarian measures can offer only temporary relief of the suffering of the Syrian people. It is only by seeking a political settlement to the question of Syria that it will be possible to achieve a fundamental improvement in the humanitarian situation in Syria. Thanks to the common efforts of all parties, including China, the second Geneva conference was held last month. That was an important step in the political settlement of the question of Syria.

Resolution 2139 (2014) gives fresh impetus to the political process in Syria. The question of Syria is complex and sensitive and not easy to resolve. We hope that the international community will insist on the political settlement of the question of Syria, insist on letting the Syrian people decide the future of their country themselves, continue to promote an inclusive political transitional process and continue efforts to foster the realization of national reconciliation and unity in Syria and to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Syria and in neighbouring countries. We hope that the parties concerned in Syria will comply with this resolution, engage in dialogue and negotiations to establish mutual trust, meet one another halfway and draw on other useful experiences so as to reach a settlement on the basis of the claims of all parties that is in line with the national conditions of Syria and that accommodates the interests of all parties.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and a responsible member of the international community, China will continue to make a positive contribution to the promotion of the early realization of the comprehensive, lasting and appropriate resolution of the question of Syria.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): The humanitarian situation in Syria is a consequence of the unabated brutal violence which has so far defied any logic or solution.

Syria's centrality to stability in the region underscores the imperative for the Council to act in concert to ensure rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance across the country. It is for this reason that Nigeria recognizes the imperative of supporting any peaceful initiative that seeks to alleviate the suffering of Syrians and leads to a permanent political solution to the protracted conflict.

We are confident that the collective action that we have taken today in adopting this resolution (resolution 2139 (2014)) is a significant and giant step towards protecting the defenceless civililans, including women and children, in Syria, who continue to bear the brunt of the deadly confrontation between opposing forces.

We express regret that there was no consensus on the inclusion of a paragraph in the final text calling upon all States to refrain from transferring arms to the parties in the Syrian conflict, given that such arms could be used to commit or to facilitate Syria's violations or abuses of international human rights or humanitarian law.

Nonetheless, the adoption of this resolution today is a powerful and visible demonstration of the renewed commitment of the Council to work in the higher interests of the Syrian people. We expect that concerted effort to be replicated subsequently in the Council's future efforts.

We want in particular to commend Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg not only for their leadership, but especially for accommodating the views of Council members in the course of the negotiations.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement by thanking the delegations of Australia, Luxembourg and Jordan for preparing this resolution (resolution 2139 (2014)) and for the flexibility that they showed in negotiating it.

Through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014), the Security Council has taken an important

and necessary step in helping to address the critical humanitarian situation in Syria, which deteriorates daily and which has tragically affected the Syrian people. The situation has had a serious impact on the neighbouring countries and has become a threat to international peace and security. A void has thus been filled, given that the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15) has not been implemented, nor did it lead to progress on the ground.

My delegation voted in favour of the resolution, which is a forceful message that obliges all parties to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law, to ensure the protection of civilians and to establish specific measures on the ground to enable prompt, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the affected population throughout Syria.

We believe the reference to accountability before the law for those who have committed human rights violations and abuses to be of particular importance. For my delegation, the cases that could constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity should be referred to the International Criminal Court.

The resolution that we have adopted must be fully implemented in all its provisions. In the case of non-compliance, the Council should consider additional measures. In accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the States Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council.

It is our conviction that only through a political solution can we put an end to the humanitarian crisis. We agree with the call by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy concerning the need to seek such a political solution to the conflict. With that in mind, it is crucial to put an end to the militarization of the conflict, as stated in the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex).

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014). This resolution is a new landmark in the Council's work but also one that is long overdue. For nearly three years, the humanitarian crisis in Syria has deteriorated while the Council has been seemingly unable to take proper action to provide relief to the long suffering of the Syrian people. Hopefully, our unity today will ensure the Council's effective role in dealing with the crisis from this day forward. We express our appreciation to the authors of the resolution — Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg — for their advocacy of humanitarian causes.

The Republic of Korea voted in favour of the resolution, as it lays out important steps to alleviate the suffering of all civilians in Syria, especially those who are trapped in besieged areas. The resolution demands that all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, promptly allow rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for all United Nations agencies and their partners, including across conflict lines and across borders. As we welcome the resolution, we are also aware that it will not end the conflict. We urge both parties in Syria to engage more seriously in political negotiations.

In that regard, we reaffirm our unqualified support for the mediation efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Special Envoy Brahimi.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Rwanda would like to explain its vote on resolution 2139 (2014), just adopted, on the humanitarian situation in Syria. First of all, I commend Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg for proposing this important resolution, which was necessary following the failure by all Syrian parties to fully implement the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15).

Rwanda voted in favour of the resolution because we are appalled by the worsening humanitarian situation on the ground, as reported on many occasions to the Council by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos. We are particularly concerned about the siege on many cities and populated areas in Syria, including the Old City of Homs, where innocent civilians, including women and children, were trapped for months without any access to basic humanitarian assistance.

Rwanda has on various occasions expressed its position on the Syrian crisis. Like all Council members, we believe that there can be no military solution to the conflict. We reiterate our call on all parties to remain engaged for a peaceful and political settlement through the ongoing second Geneva Conference on Syria, which is the only viable solution that will end the security, political and humanitarian crisis in Syria.

It is in that context that we deeply regret that the important amendments on the responsibility of States that are supplying weapons to the Syrian parties were not included in the final version of the resolution. Those

reasonable amendments, based on agreed language, merely expressed grave concern at the negative impact of the transfer and use of weapons in Syria in terms of loss of life, security and stability. The amendments also underlined that the increased arms transfers to all parties in Syria hurt the prospect of a political settlement to the conflict, and called upon all States to refrain from transferring arms to the parties in the Syrian conflict when they assessed that they would be used in committing crimes.

It is therefore a shame that, after three years of a conflict in which over 100,000 people have been killed, 6.5 million have been internally displaced and 9.3 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, we instead continue to supply more and more weapons. We therefore urge that the Secretary-General's call be heeded, as he has been telling us to stop fuelling this conflict with deadly weapons and, rather, use our influence in convincing both parties to make significant progress in the Geneva peace talks. I think that is very wise.

To conclude, we hope that, unlike the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), resolution 2139 (2014) will be fully implemented by both parties, including through the lifting of the siege on all cities and populated areas and the granting of full access to humanitarian assistance.

I have the feeling that the Syrian crisis has been gravely undermining the credibility of the Security Council for three years now. Nonetheless, following the resumption of the peace talks and the ongoing process for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, which was all facilitated by permanent members of the Council, we express the wish that they will use the same influence to ensure a significant improvement on the humanitarian front.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): Chad welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014), on the humanitarian situation in Syria, following lengthy negotiations in which everyone made commendable efforts to reach a compromise. We thank the Security Council members who took the initiative to promote this resolution, which will certainly contribute to relieving the suffering of the civilian population of Syria, who have been attacked with barrel bombs, besieged, displaced and become refugees.

Chad is very aware of the humanitarian issues in Syria, and we hope that the implementation of the provisions of the resolution will enable the population to have access to the humanitarian assistance that they are unjustly deprived of. The Syrian authorities are called upon to put an end to violence against the civilian population and violations of international humanitarian law and pave the way for true negotiations in order to reach acceptable solutions to the Syrian crisis.

We welcome the firmness shown by Council members and their commitment to the Syrian people, and we encourage the Council to continue efforts in that direction.

The resolution is a call on the Syrian parties to shoulder their responsibilities and prioritize dialogue in order to bring an end to the abuses that innocent civilians have fallen victim to. We believe that speeding up the destruction of chemical weapons and ending the use of barrel bombs would help create conditions conducive to a return to stability in Syria.

Chad supports the efforts of the international community in seeking a lasting solution in Syria, and resolution 2139 (2014) is a very important step in that direction.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Lithuania.

Lithuania welcomes the unanimous adoption of this resolution on humanitarian issues in Syria (resolution 2139 (2014)). The unanimous vote today is a message of vital importance for those Syrians who have been for long months desperately waiting for humanitarian assistance: that the Council is ready to step up its efforts in addressing one of the most horrendous humanitarian situations of this century.

For too many Syrians, this moment of Council unity has come too late. What has transpired during the three years of mounting atrocities defies description. Yet today we have a moment of hope — hope for those under siege, hope for those watching their loved ones succumb to starvation and hope for those living under the constant threat of aerial bombardments, mortar attacks and barrel bombs.

We strongly hope that today's unanimous vote by the Council will make a tangible difference in addressing the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people and ensuring rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

It is now up to the parties to the conflict to act immediately and decisively to implement the resolution in full and to put an end to the horrific abuses of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Compliance by all parties to the conflict, especially the Syrian Government, which bears the primary and ultimate responsibility to protect its population, is paramount. My delegation underlines that the Council should and must be ready to take the necessary further steps in the event that the parties to the conflict fail to heed the call of the resolution. The Council's credibility is at stake.

Let me also underline the importance of accountability for all the war crimes, crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights that have taken place during these three long years. Impunity breeds violence and perpetuates conflict. Impunity cannot be allowed to continue. The Council must use the all tools at its disposal, including referrals to the International Criminal Court, to address the issue and render justice to the nearly 140,000 dead and the millions made refugees and displaced by this conflict.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I had wanted to welcome the presence of His Excellency the Secretary-General here with us, but he has now left the Chamber. I shall therefore proceed directly with my statement.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has been eager to improve the humanitarian situation of its people. Therefore, on the basis of its constitutional and international obligations, it has continued to work day and night to fulfil all the humanitarian needs of its citizens. In parallel to that, the Syrian Government has worked to restore peace and stability to the entire country.

The Syrian Government is fully committed to, and fully abides by, its international commitments, including its commitment to cooperate with the United Nations and its agencies in the humanitarian field, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the guidelines laid out therein, first and foremost of which is respect for the national sovereignty of States.

Accordingly, in the context of the Syrian Government's implementation of the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), the Syrian Government has implemented a number of administrative and logistic measures that enable the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to expand their activities and increase their effectiveness. That would not have been possible had it not been for the cooperation of the Syrian Government and the measures it has taken to facilitate them as a full partner. I would like to give just one example in that regard, namely, the agreement by the Syrian Government to open a third air bridge to carry humanitarian assistance from the Iraqi city of Erbil to the Syrian city of Qamishli. That air bridge entailed 11 flights, while the first and second had 13 and 10, respectively. The Syrian Government has also offered to use its own air fleet to carry out those flights as a gesture of goodwill.

In addition to the partnership I have just detailed, I would like to remind the Council of the fact that the Syrian Government has borne the brunt of the distribution of humanitarian assistance in Syria. We have covered 75 per cent of such assistance, whereas United Nations bodies and other international organizations operating in Syria have covered only 25 per cent of the total amount of assistance distributed.

Certain Governments, some of which are members of the Council, have, in response to Syria's openness, cooperation and positive commitment in the humanitarian field, persisted in and maintained their campaign of deception, sowing doubts and spreading crude claims. That clearly reveals their evil intentions in principle against Syria. That has also revealed that some of them have sadistic intentions. They want to prevail in international relations at the expense of the pain, suffering and destroyed hopes of the Syrian nation.

Some States have exposed their deep frustration at the emergence of positive developments in the humanitarian and political fields. That frustration was reflected in destruction and terrorism. The Syrian Government has paid the price, and continues to do so.

In addition, there has been a campaign of increasingly provocative statements and inflammatory meetings to encourage and provoke, clearly and crudely, the armed terrorist groups, which are under the command of certain Member States. Those States sponsor and train the groups with a view to depriving

Syrian citizens of their daily bread and livelihoods. The Syrian people are left to sink deeper into suffering, as my dear colleague from Argentina said.

The fact that some members of the Council have sought to reduce the situation in Syria to a politicized humanitarian issue alone itself exacerbates the humanitarian crisis and trades on the suffering of the Syrian people. It is also a biased and subjective reading of the situation, which masks the serious interventionist agenda that seeks to manipulate the humanitarian crisis and mislead international public opinion. Suffice it to say that some members of the Council have objected eight times to the adoption of even a press statement denouncing terrorist acts that have taken the lives of thousands of innocent Syrian civilians. Those same States that are so very eager to discuss the humanitarian situation in Syrian have also refused to provide ambulances and wheelchairs for people with special needs.

The Syrian Government has long welcomed all sincere efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria and has cooperated positively with the United Nations. We also welcomed the presidential statement of October 2013 and abided by its provisions.

Humanitarian support to the Syrian people cannot be effective unless it is accompanied in word and deed by an end to the efforts to politicize humanitarian issues and an end to terrorist acts. The activities of the armed terrorist groups, including those associated with Al-Qaida, are the main cause of the humanitarian suffering of the Syrian people. Those armed terrorist groups systematically target infrastructure, destroying the country and bleeding it of its resources. In addition, they are intentionally targeting in a premeditated way humanitarian convoys, which they have repeatedly plundered. They have also attacked and killed several humanitarian workers, in addition to mounting attacks and blockades against a number of areas of Syria, depriving the civilian inhabitants of humanitarian aid for long periods. Such use of civilians as humanitarian hostages and human shields seeks to prevent the Syrian security forces and army from taking action against the terrorists.

In that context, the Syrian Government, like those of all other States Members of this Organization, is upholding its constitutional right and obligation to fight terrorism, which is indiscriminately targeting Syria. It is doing so based on international law and the resolutions of the Council.

Law enforcement is at the heart of State authority, and that includes countering terrorist activities carried out on our territory. No one can deny the duty of and exclusive right of the State to do so.

In addition to the terrorist activities I just mentioned, it is well known that the coercive unilateral economic measures illegitimately imposed by certain States against the Syrian people have had a negative impact on the livelihoods and living conditions of the Syrian people.

There is also the additional obstacle of the lack of humanitarian financing. The financing of the humanitarian response plan for 2014 has not exceeded 7 per cent of the required funding, in spite of the highly publicized conferences being held left and right. The amount of financing for the regional response plan for Syrian refugees has not exceeded 13 per cent.

The Syrian Government announced early on that it was serious and sincere in seeking to resolve the crisis through a political process built on dialogue with all political actors and civil, cultural and economic constituencies within the country, including the national opposition and those armed groups that lay down their weapons and give priority to the language of reason and law in order to preserve the country and safeguard its institutions. In that context, the Government has provided genuine judicial, security and political guarantees to those who wish to be involved in that national process. Indeed, the Government approach has led to concrete results on the ground in several areas of Syria. Recently, a number of local reconciliation processes have been implemented, sending a clear message to the world that the people of Syria are capable of resolving this crisis by themselves, free of any outside manipulation of their interests.

What we have just heard from a colleague — that the security forces arrested some Syrians following their surrender within the reconciliation process — is entirely untrue and I hereby deny it in front of all present. In that context, the Government is working round the clock to make sure that all service facilities in those areas will be ready to provide for the needs of the residents and to receive the remaining displaced persons who are willing to return to their homes to live in peace and stability. In the end, their homeland is the final refuge for its people, especially if we take

into consideration the fact that the suffering of Syrian refugees has become a political commodity to be traded crassly; likewise for the suffering, deteriorating health, living and security conditions and unethical indignities imposed on the Syrians living in refugee camps.

The Syrian Government has abided by all of the provisions of the presidential statement issued by the Security Council on 2 October 2013. I myself welcomed it a few minutes after its adoption. Many of its provisions are reiterated in the resolution just adopted by the Council. That resolution, in turn, clearly and unequivocally confirmed that international terrorism was being carried out by groups associated with Al-Qaida, after having denied, in an unjustified and incomprehensible way, its existence throughout the Syrian crisis.

The time has come for the Council to carry out seriously and firmly its duties in dealing with the roots of the humanitarian situation, namely, the terrorist activities perpetrated by Takfirist groups against civilians in Syria with the support of well-known Governments, individuals and entities that have become known to everybody — support in which the Israeli occupying forces are taking part publicly and with the knowledge of the peacekeeping department in the disengagement zone in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Delivering humanitarian assistance across borders can never be done in a manner that violates Syrian national sovereignty as guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations. Here we would like to warn against going beyond the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the guidelines for the provision of humanitarian assistance, creating the false impression that merely allowing cross-border humanitarian operations, with neighbouring States that are involved in escalating the humanitarian situation, supporting, arming, training and funding Daesh, Al-Qaida, the Al Nusra Front and the "Islamist" Front as well as others, would resolve and put an end to the humanitarian crisis for millions of Syrians — this is nothing more than a delusion, a parody of the children's bedtime story, "The magic wand", that is told to them to make them fall asleep. That is because these borders with some neighbouring States are the source of terrorism into Syria and bloodshed of the Syrian people.

Yes, as my dear colleague the Ambassador of Nigeria said, the violence has reached the threshold of nonsense and illogic, that is true. But the more important question remains, why is this happening in Syria, and why this unjustified silence concerning forms of the flagrant external intervention in Syrian internal affairs? The prevailing mentality among some, unfortunately, is that of a diplomacy of hyenas, not of international humanitarian law.

One last remark. A colleague stated that the Syrian Government delegation in Geneva had rejected the draft agenda submitted by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. I am here formally denying that, because I was there in the room and I approved the draft agenda one minute after it was presented. It was the other party that rejected the draft agenda, and you can ask the international mediator, Mr. Brahimi, when he meets with the Council soon, about the details of that story.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.